

to present their ideas. One of the most controversial designs for the airport tower resembles a giant *moai* with *pukao*, approximately twenty meters high. [We are not making this up. Hey, if Las Vegas can have a hotel shaped like a pyramid....] Mayor Edmunds announced this choice on local TV. Not all islanders think a *moai*-shaped tower is OK. One can only pray this tacky idea will be a reject. Will the eyes flash red lights?

THE GREAT DOG ROUNDUP took place on the island this winter. Hanga Roa was saturated with dogs and for about a week Rapa Nui cowboys (who were paid for each dog they brought in) began capturing them at every curanto, morning market, and general human get-together (which the dogs would also frequent). One eager guy tried to take a dog from its own backyard. It was said that they would be killed by injection. In former years, poisoned meat would be thrown out every so often, and then a crew would go around and collect the dead dogs. It would be nice if dog owners had the option of spaying or altering the dogs as a better means of animal control. [While the spaying female dogs is done on the Chilean mainland, we were bemused to hear that Chilean vets do not neuter male animals. Machismo is alive and well in Chile.]

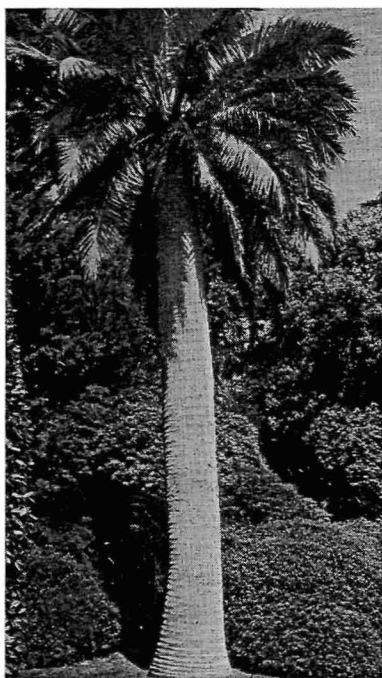
THE NEW SCHOOL HAS BEEN APPROVED and looks exiting. It will be constructed at the site of the old leper sanatorium. There will be around 500 to 600 pupils. The first classrooms should be ready by March 2001 and the rest should be ready the following year. There will be areas for laboratories, workshops, etc. The idea is to have a school where the elders of the island can teach the children about the old knowledge, as well as to have visiting scholars from other countries, making it a center of education and learning.

CONAF HAS BEEN BUSY with a tree planting project in the crater at Rano Raraku, as well as at the park ranger's picnic area. Among others, some coconut trees were donated by the municipality of Hanga-roa. However, some nice flame trees that were planted at the entrance to the site were cut down because someone (it is said a guide, but no one takes responsibility) complained that the trees interfered with the view, although a few steps in either direction provided a clear view.

SEA CREATURES. A whale was spotted at Hanga-roa Bay, a rare sighting at Easter Island. Jacques Mayol (the "dolphin man") visited Rapa Nui at the invitation of the Orca Diving Center. He was interested in the petroglyphs that display dolphins and whales, and is talking of doing a documentary about diving in the island's offshore waters. A Marine sanctuary was created last year at Punta Roa, between Apina and Hanga Piko. The sanctuary is to protect species of fish as well as provide a secu-

rity zone for the Naval facilities in that area. In 1976, the islets of Motu Nui, Motu Iti and Motu Kao Kao were declared natural sanctuaries.

<http://www.rapanui.co.cl>



CHILEAN WINE PALM SIGHTING! Our roving correspondent from the Netherlands, Herbert von Saher, was amazed to find a Chilean wine palm at the Villa Carlotta, Lake Como, Italy. The Villa, built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century for a German princess, has a botanical garden surrounding it. In the garden he came across an enormous Chilean wine palm, so important to all Rapanuiphiles. The photograph shows the great girth of the trunk (much too big to fit into the holes at the top of Rano Raraku).

## Reviews

### Lost Gods of Easter Island

TV Review by Paul G. Bahn

On BBC television in the UK recently, we were presented with a documentary program with the above title, written and presented by Sir David Attenborough, which was a salutary lesson in how to make excellent and gripping television. It was well structured, well paced, and told a coherent story without recourse to endless talking heads and gimmicky reconstructions with actors. Apparently, Sir David was due to film on Easter Island as part of his next series on the natural world, so he presumably felt that this was a golden opportunity to make what is essentially the film of his paper to the Frankfurt Symposium (Attenborough 1990) concerning the probable origin and date of the strange, elongated human wooden statuette he bought at auction in New York about twenty years ago. Readers of the RNJ are referred to that well-argued and well-illustrated article for the basic story. Suffice it to say that Sir David makes a solid case for his statuette having been acquired on the island during Cook's visit, at the same time as the St Petersburg statuette, the only carving in the world that bears any resemblance to it. The film retraces all of his detective work, taking him from London's Museum of Mankind to the Kunstkammer in St Petersburg, the State Library in Sydney, and of course the island itself. The analysis of the statuette's wood at Kew, by Dr Paula Rudall, already reported in the 1990 article, is also recreated on camera—it proved to be *toromiro*. The film includes footage of the Kon-Tiki expedition and of Charlie Love's statue-moving experiment in Wyoming; in one amusing scene, we see Attenborough packing his suitcase, and placing a copy of Steve Fischer's edited volume, "*Easter Island Studies*" on the top, presumably because it's cover is photogenic and large enough for the camera to pick up its subject-matter easily. The program went a little farther than the article in its speculation about what the statuette represented. Since it is a goggle-eyed male figure, with elongated six-fingered hands, it is probably safe to assume that it was some kind of deity, and Sir David

equates it with Make Make; where fewer specialists would follow him. However, it is his belief that the *moai* were built in honour of the birdmen, who were buried beneath them in the platforms, and that the long fingers of the *moai* should also be equated with the birdman. It seems more likely that the birdman cult followed the *moai*-building period, and while the two probably had some links, they may not have been as strong as Attenborough believes. That quibble aside, however, this documentary can be recommended extremely warmly as a model of the genre, with meticulous research presented soberly but with the enthusiasm and verve that have become deservedly associated with this great popularizer of science.

#### REFERENCE

Attenborough, D. 1990. The first figures to be collected from Easter Island, pp. 41-50 in "State and Perspectives of Scientific Research in Easter Island Culture" (H. Esen-Baur, ed.). Courier Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg 125, Frankfurt.

*Editor's Note: Rapanuiphiles who have seen this documentary may be interested to know that the EIF has a replica of this wood carving for sale. Closely resembling the original carving so lovingly researched by Attenborough, it is beautifully carved from miro tahiti wood by Bene Aukara Tuki, one of Easter Island's most renowned carvers. It can be yours for \$400. The figure is 39 inches long and has eyes of shark vertebrae with obsidian pupils. This carving was exhibited at the Maxwell Museum of Art at the University of New Mexico and is illustrated and described in "Ingrained Images: Wood Carvings from Easter Island" by Joan Seaver Kurze. For further information, contact us at PO Box 6774, Los Osos, CA 93412, or by email: rapanui@compuserve.com*

#### EASTER ISLAND. RAPA NUI, A LAND OF ROCKY DREAMS

By José Miguel Ramírez and Carlos Huber  
Alvimpress Impresores, Chile, 2000

Review by Georgia Lee

THIS IS A GLORIOUS OVERSIZE, hard cover, high quality book that will enhance anyone's coffee table, but more than that, it is well written, with a wealth of information included in the text by José Miguel Ramírez. The photographs by Carl Huber are, simply, stunning. All photos are in full color. Excellent black/white line drawings are by Rapanui islander Te Pou Huke. The book includes 190 pages, including a glossary and bibliography.

This elegant new book contains some of the best and most dramatic photographs that we have seen of our beloved island. Many are taken from the air, showing unusual vistas that are not normally visible to earthlings—from the cliffs at Orongo to the quarry at Rano Raraku to the eroding peninsula at Poike. There are beautiful vahines and Tapati festival shots, illuminated night shots, and sunsets to die for. The chapter on the Ocean and Fishing has underwater photographs by Michel Garcia, showing us the undersea world of Rapa Nui.

The contents include: Introduction; The Setting; The Origins; Organization of the Ancient Society; Crisis and Adaptation; Megalithic Culture; Archaeoastronomy; Ideology; Wood

and Rock Carvings; Rongo Rongo; Rock Art; The Ocean and Fishing; Tattooing, Body Painting and Mutilation; The Living Culture; and Final Words.

Our Final Word: buy this book.

Jose Miguel Ramirez can be contacted at [mataverio-tai@entelchile.net](mailto:mataverio-tai@entelchile.net) for information about purchasing a copy.

The EIF hopes to be handling the US sales of this book in the near future.

#### THE KON-TIKI MUSEUM OCCASIONAL PAPERS, VOL. 5 ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF ARNE SKJØLSVOLD, 75 YEARS

Edited by Paul Wallin and Helene Martinsson-Wallin.  
The Kon-Tiki Museum, 2000

Review by Georgia Lee

THIS VOLUME IS DIVIDED into sections including Preface (by Paul Wallin and Helene Martinsson-Wallin); The Galapagos Islands; Easter Island; Polynesia/Melanesia; Peru; and the Maldiv Islands. At the back is a Bibliography of Arne Skjølsvold. The book is paper cover, 177 pages long, with black and white photos, maps and charts.

The section of most interest to readers of *RNJ* is the one on Easter Island. Included are: The Osteological Evidences for Rapa Nui Origins Reexamined, by Patrick Chapman; Stone Chicken Coops on Easter Island, by Edwin Ferdon; "No Stone Unturned"...A Reflection on the Recycling of Worked Stones on Rapa Nui, by Helene Martinsson-Wallin; and Prehistoric Basalt Mining in the La Pérouse Area of Easter Island, by Christopher Stevenson, Sonia Haoa and Michael Glascock.

Chapman's paper is particularly interesting; and Ferdon's 'take' on the *hare moa* is the first sensible thing this editor has ever read about those so-called chicken coops (See page 77-79 of this issue).

In the Polynesia/Melanesia section are papers by Atholl Anderson, Roger Green, Paul Wallin and Matthew Spriggs.

The volume is available from the Kon-Tiki Museum, Bygdoyesveien 36, 0286 Oslo, Norway. (Price not given).



#### Easter Island Foundation News/Pacific 2000

THE PACIFIC 2000 CONFERENCE, held this August on Hawai'i Island, was a great success. The venue for the conference was Hawaii Preparatory Academy (HPA), at Kamuela. The lovely campus in the cool highlands was host to more than 150 people from all over the world. From Norway to Spain, Chile to Canada, Japan to Australia and New Zealand, attendees gathered to hear and present papers during the five-day period. Special events included tours to local archaeological sites, a benefit party at the Parker Ranch estate, and a final beach-side luau.

We appreciate the behind-the-scenes work of so many people who made the conference so successful. From the HPA, we want to thank in particular: John Colson, Headmaster; Bernard Noguès, Director of Development; Rick Davis, Director of